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ABSTRACT

The Teachers College at Emporia State University sponsors a biennial survey measuring the attitudes of Kansans toward their public schools. The results of the 1989 survey are reported here (the survey was patterned after the national Gallop Poll on public education). The report opens with details of the research procedures, which includes overviews of data analysis, sample selection, alerting the sample population, and time of interviewing. Survey findings are presented next. Overall, Kansans gave their local public schools significantly better grades than people nationally give their schools, with 66 percent of those interviewed adjudging their community school either an A or B. Survey opinions are grouped under various categories and include ratings of principals and superintendents, teachers, high schools, local school boards, teacher salaries, how teachers' jobs have changed in the past 10 years, state tests for public school students, whether or not to implement a national testing program, open enrollment, public school programs for four-year olds, how Kansans would spend new state funds, latch-key programs, trends in the quality of public schools, school site management and accountability, home schooling, drug and alcohol education, and major problems facing Kansas schools. As the Kansas public perceives it, the use of drugs and alcohol is, by far, the number one problems that the public schools of the state face. The survey sample's composition is described at the end. (RJM)

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ED 417 460

KATE VI

KANSANS' ATTITUDES TOWARD EDUCATION

Dugout schoolhouse in Thomas County, Kansas 1892

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Sixth
Public
Opinion
Poll

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Interview Supervision

Darrell Wood
Interview Supervision

State Department of Education

Lee Droegemueller, Commissioner

Interviewers

Members of the American
Association of University Women
Kappa Delta Pi; and
Kansas Association for Education of
Young Children

Background of the Study

In the spring of 1980, The Teachers College at Emporia State University conducted an intensive survey of the attitudes of Kansans toward the public schools in their communities. Patterned after the national Gallup Poll on public education, the Emporia State project was named KATE (Kansans' Attitudes Toward Education).

The response of the general public and special interest groups to the report of the KATE project was such that University officials decided to repeat the study periodically. Thus, KATE II through VI have been conducted biennially.

Funding for the survey is currently being provided by The Teachers College at Emporia State and the State Department of Education. The cooperation of the State Department of Education deserves special mention; without that agency's encouragement and financial support it is doubtful that this poll or previous polls could have been completed.

The researchers in this study also acknowledge the significant contribution of the Gallup Poll toward their project. Similarity with Gallup's annual nationwide survey on public education is most evident in the general areas of (1) conceptualization and (2) the replication and modification of certain questions. The KATE poll does depart significantly with regard to (1) interviewing methodology and (2) several of the questions employed in the poll. Specifically, the KATE survey utilizes a telephone interviewing technique to ascertain attitudes while the Gallup poll employs a personal interview technique. Also, several of the questions in the KATE poll are developed to focus on specific Kansas issues.

Research Procedures

Analysis of Data

It should be noted that, in this report, all variables are not covered for each question due to the multiplicity of variables and the limitation of space; however, data for those variables which appear to be most significant are included. A brief summary pertaining to the data for each question is provided.

Allowance must be made for statistical variation, especially in the application of findings for groups where few respondents were interviewed. Every effort was made to recognize bias in sample selection and to minimize this error whenever possible. Projected error rate is plus or minus 2.5 percent.

Sample Selection

The procedures employed in determining the sample consisted of (1) identifying all telephone directories serving residents in the state of Kansas and (2) establishing a systematic procedure for selecting at random from the telephone listings the residents to be included in the poll. All telephone directories serving Kansas residents were located in the Kansas State Library.

A total of 839,567 residential telephone listings was identified as the total population. A systematic random sampling procedure was used by researchers to select 901 listings. Also, a procedure for the selection of replacement listings was established.

The sample used in this survey involved a total of 901 adults (18 years of age and older). Four sample grids were developed to enhance the randomization of individuals within each household.

Alerting the Sample Population

Letters to alert potential interviewees of the survey and to encourage their cooperation and assistance were mailed to the 901 households in the state. This prior explanation was designed to improve the cooperation of individuals surveyed and to reduce the number of contacts needed to reach the total sample size.

Time of Interviewing

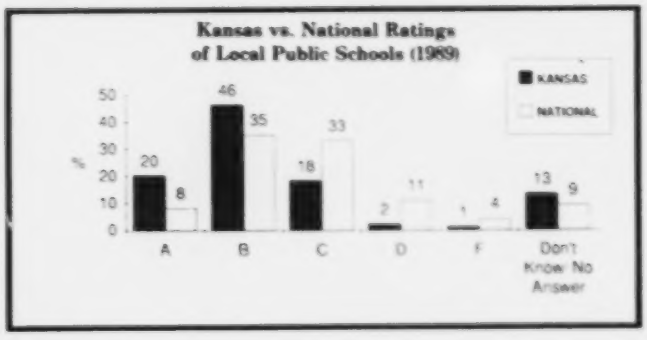
Interviews were conducted from 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. on Mondays through Thursdays and on Saturday mornings from October 16 through November 3, 1989. Callbacks were made during the day in order to contact those who could not be reached during the evening hours. Completed interviews for each three-hour calling session averaged 65. The length of each interview averaged approximately 11 minutes.

Kansans' Ratings of Public Schools In Their Community

Kansans as a whole continue to give their local public schools good grades—significantly better grades than people nationally give their schools. Statewide, 66 percent of those interviewed in the recent KATE VI survey said they think the public schools in their community deserve an A or B. Eighteen percent gave their schools a C, three percent a D or F, and 13 percent would not grade them. The grade distribution is very similar to that recorded by KATE in its state poll of two years ago.

As they have in previous KATE surveys, Kansans with children in the public schools rated their schools most favorably. Seventy-six percent of this group gave their schools an A or B, 17 percent a C, and five percent a D. There were no F's. Grading data obtained from various population groups represented in the KATE survey are shown in the accompanying table. The question:

> Students are often given the grades A-B-C-D, or Fail to denote the quality of their school work. Suppose the public schools themselves, in your community, were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the public schools in your community—A-B-C-D, or Fail?



In the 21st Annual (1989) Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools, 43 percent of the national public graded their local public schools A or B, 33 percent C and 15 percent D or F. Nationally, too, the grading pattern was much the same as it has been for the past couple of years.

	A %	B %	C %	D %	Fail %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
Kansas Totals	**20**	**46**	**18**	**2**	**1**	**13**
Respondents with—						
Children in Public Schools	26	50	17	5	0	2
Children in Private Schools	18	46	27	0	0	9
No Children in School	17	45	19	2	1	16
Education						
Non High School Graduates	20	34	14	2	0	30
High School Graduates	17	46	19	3	2	13
College (No Degree)	19	48	19	2	0	12
College (Degree)	24	48	17	2	0	9
Area of Residence						
Northwest	18	46	20	3	0	13
Southwest	8	52	24	3	0	13
North Central	15	50	22	3	0	10
South Central	28	37	20	0	0	15
Sedgwick County	10	41	28	3	3	15
Northeast	15	53	15	0	0	17
Wyandotte/Johnson Counties	31	45	6	3	1	14
East Central	21	50	17	3	0	9
Southeast	19	48	20	2	1	10
Type of Community						
City or Town	17	45	21	2	1	14
Suburban	33	46	9	3	1	8
Rural	24	49	13	3	0	11

Ratings of Principals and Superintendents In the Public Schools

In past KATE surveys, respondents have given classroom teachers higher ratings than administrators. A teacher's greater day-to-day closeness with children and less vulnerability to district-wide concerns could be reasons; in any case, KATE VI results show no change in the situation. Fifty-five percent of the Kansas citizens contacted in the recent KATE poll gave the administrators an A or B, 19 percent a C, and seven percent a D or F. The question:

> Using the same grading scale, what grade would you give the administrators (principals and superintendents) of the public schools in your community—A-B-C-D, or Fail?

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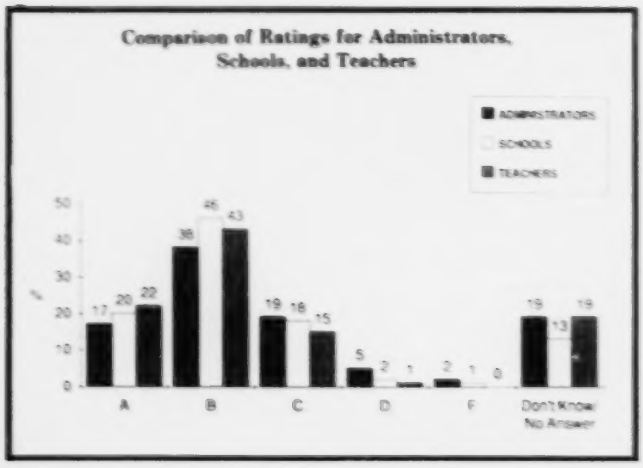
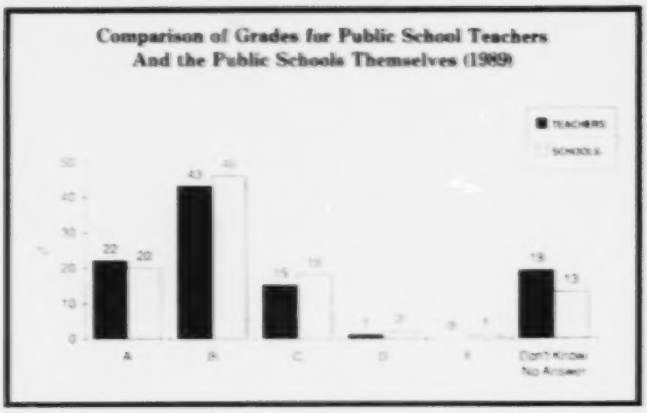
Among the larger population groups, college graduates and parents with children in the public schools gave the administrators their highest A-B percentages—each gave 61 percent. Regionally, percentages in the A-B range were highest in the southeast and northwest corners of the state—67 and 62 percent respectively.

	A %	B %	C %	D %	Fail %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
Kansas Totals	**17**	**38**	**19**	**5**	**2**	**19**
Respondents with—						
Children in Public Schools	21	40	22	7	2	8
Children in Private Schools	9	46	27	9	0	9
No Children in School	15	37	18	5	2	23
Education						
Non High School Graduates	25	21	14	3	1	36
High School Graduates	16	33	21	5	2	23
College (No Degree)	18	40	19	6	1	16
College (Degree)	14	47	20	5	2	12
Area of Residence						
Northwest	18	44	8	5	2	23
Southwest	8	40	24	9	0	19
North Central	19	41	19	2	4	15
South Central	22	39	12	6	0	21
Sedgwick County	9	36	30	3	5	17
Northeast	13	34	24	5	0	24
Wyandotte/Johnson Counties	21	34	18	4	2	21
East Central	17	36	22	6	1	18
Southeast	19	48	12	7	0	14
Type of Community						
City or Town	17	38	20	6	1	18
Suburban	22	36	21	2	1	18
Rural	15	40	15	5	2	23





How Kansans Graded Public School Teachers In Their Community

Grades for teachers should correlate highly with grades for the schools where they teach. In KATE VI, as in previous KATE polls, such a correlation materialized. The public schools received A's or B's from 66 percent of the Kansas citizens interviewed in KATE VI; the teachers received A-B ratings from 65 percent. Eighteen percent gave their schools a C grade; 15 percent assigned the teachers a C. The question:

> Now, what grade would you give the teachers in the public schools in your community—A-B-C-D, or Fail?

Teachers ranked especially high with parents who have children in their schools, another familiar pattern. Seventy-three percent gave the teachers in their local schools top grades (A or B); 19 percent gave them a C and two percent a D or F.

On the teacher question, the KATE VI percentage for each of the A-B-C-D-F grades is within one point of the grade percentages reported for teachers in KATE V.

	A %	B %	C %	D %	Fail %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
Kansas Totals	**22**	**43**	**15**	**1**	**0**	**19**
Respondents with—						
Children in Public Schools	26	48	18	1	1	6
Children in Private Schools	18	50	18	0	0	14
No Children in School	20	41	13	1	0	25
Education						
Non High School Graduates	24	27	14	0	0	35
High School Graduates	20	39	17	1	0	23
College (No Degree)	21	46	15	1	0	17
College (Degree)	23	49	12	2	0	14

How Kansans Rated Their Public High Schools

Overall, Kansans graded the public high school(s) in their community much like they did their local public schools in general: 63 percent gave their high school(s) an A or B, 18 percent graded them C, and four percent gave them a D or F. For the public schools in general, the comparable percentage distribution was 66-18-3. More Kansans (15 percent) declined to answer the high school question, which was presented as follows:

> How about the public high school(s) in your community? What grade would you give the public high school(s)—A-B-C-D, or Fail?

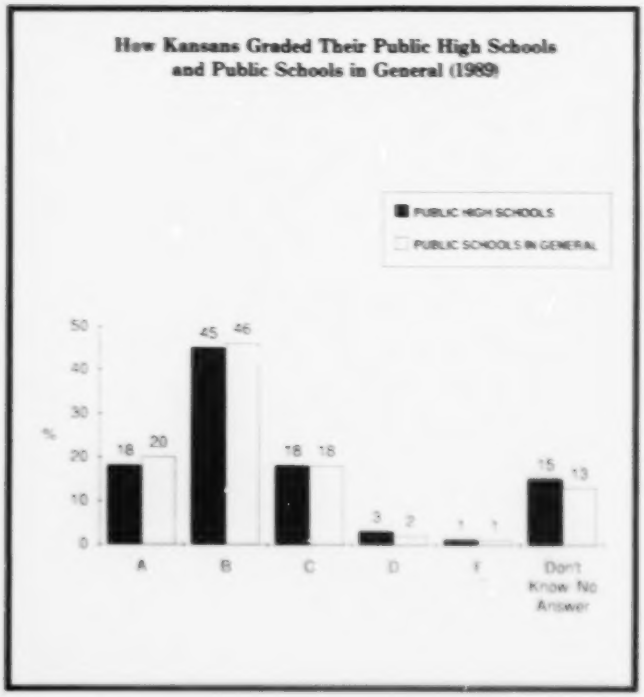
Predictably, parents with children in private schools graded the public high school(s) in their community with less favor than did parents who have children in those schools. Fifty-five percent of the private school parents did give the public high schools an A or B, but 36 percent gave them a C. Sixty-three percent of the respondents with children in their local public school(s) gave their school(s) an A or B, and 25 percent gave them a C or lower grade.

Regionally, high percentages of A-B grades were recorded for public high schools in the east central and southeast areas of the state (69 percent) and Wyandotte-Johnson counties (68 percent).

Generally, results for the high school question differed very little from the results tabulated for the same question asked in the KATE poll of two years ago.

	A %	B %	C %	D %	Fail %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
Kansas Totals	**18**	**45**	**18**	**3**	**1**	**15**
Respondents with—						
Children in Public Schools	18	45	21	4	1	11
Children in Private Schools	14	41	36	0	0	9
No Children in School	18	45	17	3	1	16
Education						
Non High School Graduates	22	29	17	1	0	31
High School Graduates	17	46	18	4	2	13
College (No Degree)	17	47	18	3	0	15
College (Degree)	19	46	20	3	0	12
Area of Residence						
Northwest	21	46	15	3	0	15
Southwest	9	49	21	2	0	19
North Central	16	46	21	4	1	12
South Central	23	40	17	1	0	19
Sedgwick County	6	40	30	3	2	19
Northeast	15	48	15	5	0	17
Wyandotte/Johnson Counties	28	40	12	3	0	17
East Central	18	51	17	3	1	10
Southeast	16	53	17	3	1	10

How Kansans Graded Their Public High Schools and Public Schools in General (1989)



Rating of Local School Boards

As elected bodies with considerable authority over school affairs (and sometimes with sharply conflicting member points of view), school boards simply do not, or at least rarely, win the kind of public approval that is often accorded other school personnel, especially teachers. Still, in three KATE surveys slight majorities of those Kansans interviewed have given their local board an A or B. In the recent survey, KATE VI, 51 percent rated their board with an A or B; in KATE V (1987) 52 percent did so; in KATE IV (1985) another 51 percent did so. The question:

> Still using the same scale, how would you grade the work of the school board in your community—A-B-C-D, or Fail?

Twenty-four percent in the recent survey rated their local board with a C, four percent with a D and two percent with an F. Similar percentages were reported for board grades in both 1987 and 1985.

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	A %	B %	C %	D %	Fail %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
Kansas Totals	**13**	**38**	**24**	**4**	**2**	**19**
Respondents with—						
Children in Public Schools	14	37	31	7	2	9
Children in Private Schools	0	55	27	0	4	14
No Children in School	13	37	22	4	2	22
Education						
Non High School Graduates	17	27	16	1	1	38
High School Graduates	16	29	25	5	3	22
College (No Degree)	12	40	25	4	2	17
College (Degree)	10	46	24	5	2	13
Type of Community						
City or Town	13	38	25	4	2	18
Suburban	16	37	22	5	1	19
Rural	14	37	20	5	2	22

Teacher Salaries in Local School Districts

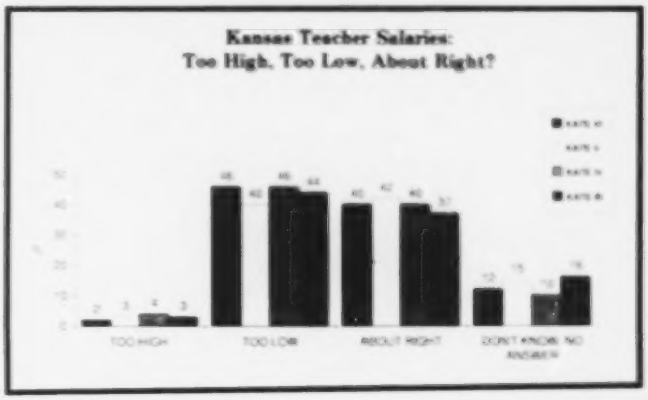
In four KATE surveys now, a plurality of Kansans have said they believe salaries for teachers in their local schools are too low. In KATE VI it was 46 percent who said this, in KATE V (1987) it was 40 percent, in KATE IV (1985) it was another 46 percent, and in KATE III (1983) it was 44 percent.

However, also in these surveys nearly as many Kansans have said they think teacher salaries are about right: KATE VI, 40 percent; KATE V, 42 percent; KATE IV, 40 percent; and KATE III, 37 percent. The question:

> Do you believe that salaries for teachers in your community are too high, too low, or about right?

Very few Kansans interviewed in KATE polls—two percent in KATE VI—have said they think the salaries of teachers in their local schools are too high. According to the Kansas-National Education Association, Kansas teacher salaries, including fringe benefits, averaged $27,360 in 1988-89. Nationally, the average was $29,625 for the same period.

As one would anticipate, some highly significant differences of opinion on the salary question are reflected in percentages compiled for population groups. For example, while 60 percent of those with an annual income of over $35,000 said teacher salaries are too low, only 34 percent whose income is between $15-25,000 agreed. Likewise, 57 percent of the residents of Sedgwick County who were contacted said the salaries of their teachers are too low, but in the southeast region of the state only 28 percent held that opinion on the salaries of their local teachers. Comparisons for these and other population groups are shown in the accompanying table of results.



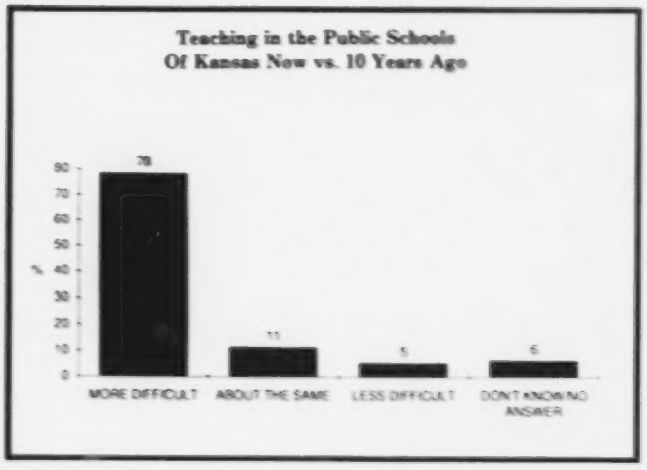
	Too High %	Too Low %	About Right %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
Kansas Totals	**2**	**46**	**40**	**12**
Respondents with—				
Children in Public Schools	2	50	37	11
Children in Private Schools	0	55	41	4
No Children in School	2	44	41	13
Education				
Non High School Graduates	3	25	50	22
High School Graduates	2	40	42	16
College (No Degree)	1	47	40	12
College (Degree)	1	58	34	7
Age				
18-24	0	45	44	11
25-34	1	51	33	15
35-49	2	53	33	12
50-64	1	49	40	10
65-Over	3	31	52	14
Area of Residence				
Northwest	3	38	38	21
Southwest	0	49	40	11
North Central	5	37	49	9
South Central	2	40	44	14
Sedgwick County	1	57	33	9
Northeast	2	42	44	12
Wyandotte/Johnson Counties	1	52	32	15
East Central	2	51	35	12
Southeast	3	28	58	11
Family Income				
Less than 15,000	1	36	47	16
15,000 - 25,000	2	34	48	16
25,000 - 35,000	1	50	42	7
Over 35,000	2	60	30	8

The Job of Teaching: Now vs. Ten Years Ago

Nearly eight out of every 10 Kansans (78 percent) whom KATE questioned recently said they believe the job of teaching in the state's public schools is more difficult now than it was 10 years ago. A mere five percent said it is less difficult, and 11 percent said it is about the same. In the data for all population groups covered in the KATE poll, results are similar. The question:

> Would you say that teachers' jobs in the public schools of Kansas are more difficult, about the same, or less difficult than 10 years ago?

	More Difficult %	About The Same %	Less Difficult %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
Kansas Totals	78	11	5	6



State Tests for Public School Students

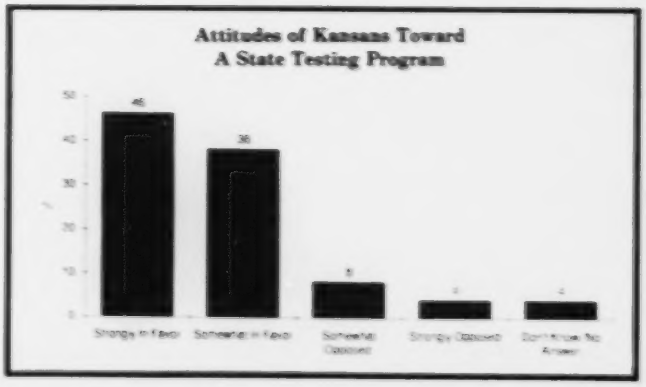
The Kansas public clearly favors giving students in their local schools state tests so that their school achievement can be compared with the achievement of students across the state. Eighty-four percent responded affirmatively to this question:

> How do you feel about giving students in the local schools state tests so that their educational achievement could be compared with students in other school districts throughout the state? Would you be **strongly in favor, somewhat in favor, somewhat opposed**, or **strongly opposed** to such a testing program?

Among the 84 percent who said they are in favor of statewide tests, 46 percent said they are strongly in favor. Only 12 percent said they are opposed.

The highest percentages in favor are in the following sub-populations: farmers (97 percent), skilled laborers (92 percent), and people with a family income of more than $35,000 (89 percent). The unemployed show the highest opposition percentage (60 percent).

	Strongly In Favor %	Somewhat In Favor %	Somewhat Opposed %	Strongly Opposed %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
Kansas Totals	46	38	8	4	4
Respondents with—					
Children in Public School	54	34	7	4	1
Children in Private School	55	32	9	0	4
Educational Background					
Non High School Graduates	41	31	8	2	18
High School Graduates	45	41	8	2	4
College (No Degree)	49	38	7	5	1
College (Degree)	47	37	9	5	2
Occupation					
Business/ Professional	49	38	8	4	1
Housewife/ Homemaker	45	36	9	6	4
Skilled Labor	50	42	4	2	2
Unskilled Labor	38	33	24	5	0
Clerical/Sales	47	31	11	8	3
Farming	38	59	0	3	0
Retired	44	33	7	4	12
Student	32	56	6	6	0
Unemployed	40	0	60	0	0
Family Income					
Less than $15,000	41	36	6	5	12
$15,000-$25,000	42	43	9	4	2
$25,000-35,000	49	36	10	3	2
Over-$35,000	51	38	7	3	1



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National Testing Program

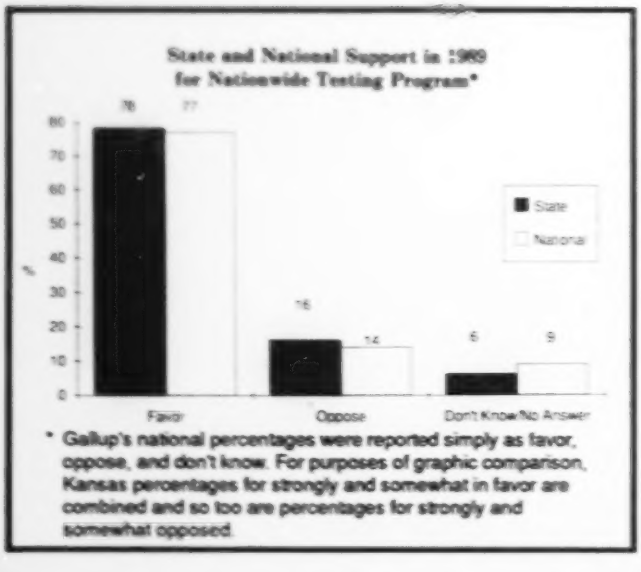
Not only did a large majority of Kansans (84 percent) say they favor a state testing program for public school students, almost as many (78 percent) expressed support for national testing so that the achievement of students in their local schools could be compared with that of students in other states. The question:

> Now, how about national tests? Would you be strongly in favor, somewhat in favor, somewhat opposed, or strongly opposed to giving students in local schools national tests so that their educational achievement could be compared with students in other states?

Forty percent of those who responded to the KATE question said they are strongly in favor of national testing, and 38 percent said they are somewhat in favor. Only 16 percent opposed the idea. In both 1988 and 1989, people across the country expressed equally favorable support for national testing. Gallup reported in 1988 that 81 percent of those surveyed favored the idea. In 1989 the percent in favor was 77 nationally.

In the Kansas survey, responses in favor of national tests were especially numerous among the following population groups: parents with children in school, people in age groups under 50, and those who have attended or graduated from college.

	Strongly In Favor %	Somewhat In Favor %	Somewhat Opposed %	Strongly Opposed %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
Kansas Totals	**40**	**38**	**9**	**7**	**6**
Respondents with—					
Children in Public School	49	38	7	5	1
Children in Private School	37	38	10	8	7
No Children in School	37	38	10	8	7
Education					
Non High School Graduates	35	29	9	6	21
High School Graduates	34	41	12	6	7
College (No Degree)	42	41	8	6	3
College (Degree)	46	35	7	9	3
Age					
18-24	29	59	11	1	0
25-34	44	41	8	5	2
35-49	47	36	8	7	2
50-64	43	34	10	8	5
Clerical/Sales	30	36	9	9	16
Type of Community					
City or Town	40	38	9	7	6
Suburban	45	35	6	11	3
Rural	38	43	9	5	5



* Gallup's national percentages were reported simply as favor, oppose, and don't know. For purposes of graphic comparison, Kansas percentages for strongly and somewhat in favor are combined and so too are percentages for strongly and somewhat opposed.

Open Enrollment

Allowing students and parents to choose which public schools the students will attend is a relatively new concept in American education, but it has already been enacted into law in three states (Minnesota, Arkansas, and Iowa) and it has won strong endorsement from the Bush administration. What kind of reception is the idea getting in Kansas? A mildly favorable one, KATE discovered, with this question:

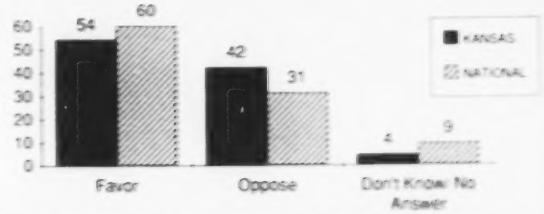
> How do you feel about allowing students and their parents to choose which public schools the students attend, tuition free, regardless of where they live? Would you be **strongly in favor, somewhat in favor, somewhat opposed,** or **strongly opposed** to this open enrollment?

A slight majority (54 percent) of the Kansans contacted said they are in favor of open enrollment—25 percent strongly so and 29 percent somewhat. Forty-two percent said they are opposed to the idea—17 percent strongly so and 25 percent somewhat. Four percent declined to answer the question.

In the 21st annual Gallup/Phi Delta Kappa national poll on education conducted recently, 60 percent said they favor open enrollment—also known as parental choice—and 31 percent said they oppose it. When asked what effect they think allowing students and their parents to choose the students' schools would have on the public schools in their communities, 21 percent of the national public said it would improve all, and 14 percent said it would hurt all. The majority, 51 percent, said it would improve some schools and hurt others. That question was not asked in the Kansas poll.

	Strongly In Favor %	Somewhat In Favor %	Somewhat Opposed %	Strongly Opposed %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
Kansas Totals	25	29	25	17	4
Respondents with—					
Children in School	30	31	23	13	3
No Children in School	23	28	25	19	5
Educational Background					
Non High School Graduates	24	26	23	15	12
High School Graduates	30	24	26	15	5
College (No Degree)	23	32	23	18	4
College (Degree)	23	31	27	19	0
Age					
18-24	29	39	23	9	0
25-34	26	34	25	14	1
35-49	26	32	24	14	4
50-64	23	26	26	21	4
65-Over	24	20	26	22	8
Area of Residence					
Northwest	26	38	20	13	3
Southwest	30	30	19	14	7
North Central	26	29	25	14	6
South Central	21	29	32	9	9
Sedgwick County	36	22	25	15	2
Northeast	20	27	32	14	7
Wyandotte/ Johnson Counties	23	25	24	24	4
East Central	19	31	25	23	2
Southeast	30	36	17	16	1

Comparison of Kansas and National Attitudes Toward Open Enrollment



* National percentages on the open enrollment question were reported by Gallup simply as favor and oppose; for purposes of comparison graphically, Kansas percentages for strongly and somewhat in favor were combined, as were percentage for strongly and somewhat opposed.

Public School Programs for Four-Year Olds

There is substantial citizen support in Kansas today for establishing programs for four-year olds in the public schools—programs similar to Head Start. Two-thirds (67 percent) of the 901 Kansas adults interviewed during KATE VI said they favor such an idea; 26 percent said they are opposed. KATE interviewers asked the following question:

> How do you feel about the public schools offering programs similar to Head Start at district expense for four-year-old children? Would you be **strongly in favor, somewhat in favor, somewhat opposed,** or **strongly opposed** to such programs?

Public School sponsorship of pre-school education was also addressed in KATE IV (1985) but with a question that was worded differently. The KATE IV question was presented as follows:

> Should the public schools in your community be responsible for providing pre-school education for three- and four-year olds?

To the 1985 question only 28 percent of the Kansans polled answered affirmatively while 66 percent responded negatively, just the reverse of the favorable-unfavorable response pattern that emerged in the recent survey. One observes, however, that three-year olds were included in the question four years ago, and no allusion was made then to Head Start, a well-publicized, federally funded pre-school program that research indicates has been quite effective.

In the 1989 KATE poll, Kansans in the younger age groups 18-24 and 25-34 responded favorably in large numbers. More than 80 percent in each of these two age ranges said they are in favor of public school programs for four-year olds. There was not such high enthusiasm for the idea among older citizens, but in all age groups a majority endorsed it.

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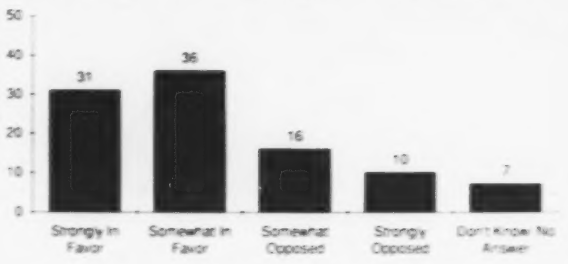
Comparison of Favorable-Unfavorable Attitudes Toward Establishing Public School Programs for Four-Year Olds



	Strongly In Favor %	Somewhat In Favor %	Somewhat Opposed %	Strongly Opposed %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
Kansas Totals	31	36	16	10	7
Respondents with—					
Children in School	35	35	15	8	7
No Children in School	30	35	17	10	8
Age					
18-24	39	48	11	1	1
25-34	35	46	8	7	4
35-49	32	35	19	9	5
50-64	33	26	20	12	9
65-Over	25	32	17	13	13
Type of Community					
City or Town	32	36	16	9	7
Suburban	35	33	17	7	8
Rural	25	37	17	12	9
Family Income					
Less than $15,000	35	33	16	10	6
$15,000-$25,000	31	39	16	7	7
$25,000-35,000	34	38	15	9	4
Over-$35,000	30	33	20	10	7

How Kansans Would Spend New State Funds

If new state funds were to become available, Kansans would want them invested first in education. They said so in no uncertain terms during the KATE VI survey, just as they did two years ago in KATE V. In fact, the priorities of Kansans today for spending new state money are identical to those recorded by interviewers in 1987. The question was presented this way:

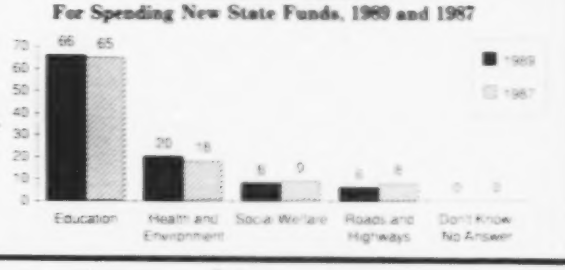
> I am going to name four major categories in which tax moneys are spent. They are **health and environment, roads and highways, social welfare,** and **education**. Please indicate which category should receive first priority with regard to new funds. Which should be second? Third? Fourth?

Again, with high consistency across the state, a two-thirds majority (66 percent) said that new funds should go first for education. To avoid response bias, the names of the spending categories were rotated from interview to interview.

Health and environment received top priority from 20 percent of the respondents, social welfare from eight percent, and roads and highways from six percent. A comparison of the Kansas public's priorities in 1989 and 1987 is shown in the accompanying graph.

	Health and Environment Priority				Roads and Highways Priority				Social Welfare Priority				Education Priority			
	1 %	2 %	3 %	4 %	1 %	2 %	3 %	4 %	1 %	2 %	3 %	4 %	1 %	2 %	3 %	4 %
Kansas Totals	20	36	30	14	6	18	29	47	8	20	35	37	66	26	6	2
Sex																
Male	20	38	27	15	7	22	29	42	8	16	36	40	67	24	7	2
Female	21	34	32	13	5	16	28	51	9	24	34	33	66	27	6	1
Respondents with—																
Children in School	15	44	30	11	4	11	28	57	7	23	38	32	74	23	3	0
No Children in School	22	33	30	15	7	21	29	43	9	19	34	38	64	27	7	2
Children in Public Schools	14	44	30	12	4	13	28	55	6	22	39	33	76	21	3	0
Children in Private Schools	28	43	24	5	4	5	32	59	9	23	32	36	59	32	9	0
Education																
Non High School Graduates	23	27	32	19	9	27	26	39	17	16	32	35	54	30	10	6
High School Graduates	19	36	32	13	8	24	25	43	7	19	33	41	69	22	6	1
College (No Degree)	21	36	30	13	4	15	32	49	9	21	33	37	67	27	5	1
College (Degree)	21	39	26	14	5	13	29	53	7	21	40	32	68	27	4	1
Age																
18-24	29	29	30	12	5	6	19	68	16	23	42	19	52	40	8	0
25-34	17	36	29	16	6	14	24	56	9	21	42	28	69	27	4	0
35-49	19	41	30	10	5	16	30	49	6	20	35	39	70	24	5	1
50-64	27	40	23	10	5	20	32	43	5	15	37	43	64	25	8	3
65-Over	16	26	35	21	8	27	31	34	10	23	26	41	69	22	7	2
Region																
Northwest	26	31	29	14	3	28	26	43	6	18	38	38	68	25	5	2
Southwest	11	30	37	22	7	30	22	41	7	19	39	35	75	22	2	1
North Central	20	32	36	22	6	23	30	41	11	22	36	31	65	23	8	4
South Central	24	30	29	18	5	16	27	50	10	22	36	32	61	30	9	0
Sedgwick County	17	43	28	12	6	16	27	53	7	21	40	32	73	21	5	1
Northeast	20	36	37	7	11	17	26	46	7	21	30	42	67	24	5	4
Wyandotte/Johnson Counties	17	38	31	14	5	16	28	51	9	23	34	34	70	25	4	1
East Central	24	41	27	8	6	9	32	53	7	21	34	38	64	28	8	0
Southeast	24	35	26	15	9	27	34	30	7	11	31	51	63	27	8	2
Family Income																
Less than 15,000	21	29	35	15	6	23	24	45	11	23	31	35	62	24	10	4
15,000-25,000	19	41	23	17	6	17	33	44	8	19	36	35	69	24	6	1
25,000-35,000	16	35	34	15	6	19	28	47	12	16	33	37	66	28	5	1
Over 35,000	24	38	27	11	5	14	30	51	4	22	37	37	67	27	6	0
Political Affiliation																
Republican	19	37	32	12	5	20	30	45	7	19	33	41	71	23	5	1
Democrat	23	32	31	14	6	17	25	52	10	26	34	30	63	27	8	2
Independent	22	39	22	17	7	13	33	47	9	21	36	32	63	28	7	2
Other	26	37	25	12	7	23	33	37	3	9	37	51	65	30	5	0

The Priorities of Kansans For Spending New State Funds, 1989 and 1987

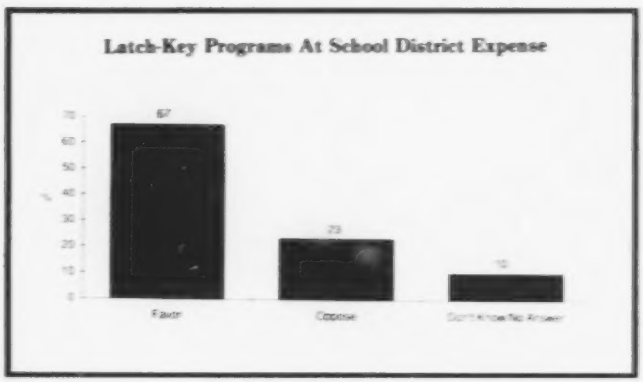


Latch-Key Programs

Should the public schools offer, at district expense, programs for "latch-key" children—that is, children under 12 years old whose parents are at work before or after school hours? Two-thirds (67 percent) of the Kansans contacted during KATE VI said yes. Among younger Kansas adults (18-35) more than 80 percent voiced support for this idea. The question:

> Would you favor or oppose the local public schools offering, at district expense, before-school and after-school programs where needed for so-called latch-key children; that is, those children under age 12 whose parents do not return home until late in the day or who must be at work before the school day starts?

Statewide, 23 percent responded "oppose" to the question, and 10 percent would not express an opinion.



	Favor %	Oppose %	Don't Know No Answer %
Kansas Totals	**67**	**23**	**10**
Sex			
Male	63	28	9
Female	71	19	10
Respondents with—			
Children in Public Schools	71	24	5
Children in Private Schools	68	23	9
No Children in School	66	23	11
Age			
18-24	82	12	6
25-34	82	13	5
35-49	68	25	7
50-64	56	33	11
65-Over	59	24	17
Occupation			
Business/Professional	72	23	5
Housewife/Homemaker	58	28	14
Skilled Labor	68	25	7
Unskilled Labor	62	24	14
Clerical/Sales	80	17	3
Farming	56	35	9
Retired	57	24	19
Student	94	6	0
Unemployed	20	40	40
Undesignated	92	0	8

In their 1988 survey on education, Gallup interviewers asked a series of questions on the same subject. Seventy percent of the national public expressed general approval of latch-key programs; however, among those who approved, a plurality (49 percent) said they believe parents should pay for the programs, while only 34 percent said they think tax money should be used. On a related subject—day-long summer programs for latch-key children—the national public was evenly divided: 46 percent in favor, 45 percent opposed.

In Kansas, majorities in support of latch-key programs financed and supervised by the public schools were highest among citizens in the following population groups: students (94 percent), the age group 18-34 (82 percent), people in clerical or sales work (80 percent). The highest opposition percentages were among farmers (35 percent) and people in the age group 50-64 (33 percent). High and low percentages were greater among the unemployed and undesignated categories, but the number of people in these categories was exceedingly small compared to other population groups.

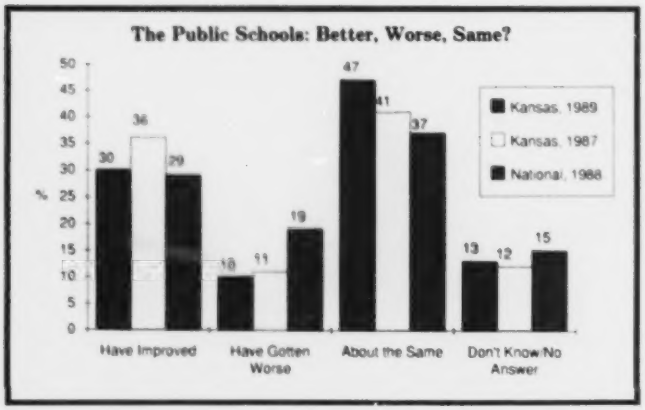
The Quality of the Public Schools: Up? Down? About the Same?

When asked about the quality of the public schools in their community now compared to five years ago, 30 percent of the Kansans surveyed in KATE VI said their schools have improved, 10 percent said they have gotten worse, and 47 percent said they have stayed the same. The question:

> Would you say that the public schools in your community have improved from, say, five years ago, gotten worse, or stayed about the same?

When that question was asked two years ago (KATE V), 36 percent said their schools had improved, 11 percent said they had gotten worse, and 41 percent said they had stayed the same. Nationally in 1988, the percentages for the same questions were 29 for improved, 19 for gotten worse, and 37 for stayed the same, according to Gallup poll results for that year. The question was not asked by Gallup in 1989.

	Improved %	Gotten Worse %	Stayed The Same %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
Kansas Totals	**30**	**10**	**47**	**13**
Respondents with—				
Children in Public Schools	36	11	45	8
Children in Private Schools	14	18	64	4
No Children in School	29	9	47	15
Educational Background				
Non High School Graduates	37	9	39	15
High School Graduates	35	9	46	10
College (No Degree)	29	10	46	15
College (Degree)	26	10	52	12
Age				
18-24	36	6	52	6
25-34	33	5	42	20
35-49	28	14	50	8
50-64	29	9	49	13
65-Over	32	9	45	14



School Site Management And Accountability

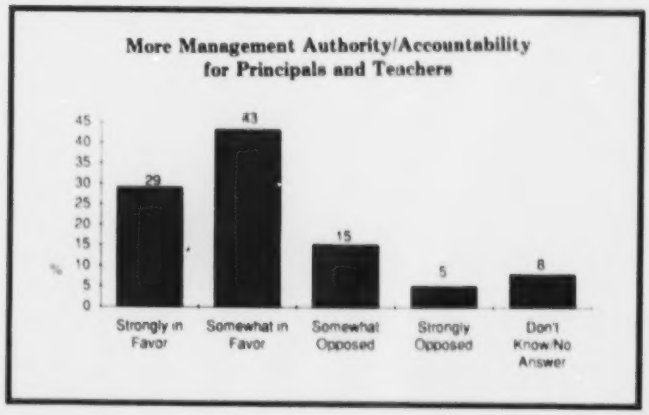
Nearly three-fourths of the Kansans polled by KATE said they favor giving school principals and teachers more authority for the operation of their school and also holding them more strictly accountable for results. To the following question 72 percent gave an affirmative response:

> It has been suggested that school principals and teachers in each building be given more authority to determine curriculum, who will teach in their school and how the school will operate. In return, the principal and teachers would be held accountable for the school's performance. Would you be strongly in favor, somewhat in favor, somewhat opposed, or strongly opposed to this recommendation?

Twenty-nine percent said they are strongly in favor and 43 percent somewhat in favor of such a management arrangement. Twenty percent said they are opposed—15 percent somewhat and five percent strongly.

Gallup's 1989 survey on public school education also addressed the site-management issue but focused the question exclusively on greater management authority for principals. Teachers were not included in Gallup's management equation.

	Strongly In Favor %	Somewhat In Favor %	Somewhat Opposed %	Strongly Opposed %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
Kansas Totals	**29**	**43**	**15**	**5**	**8**
Respondents with—					
Children in Public Schools	31	40	20	7	2
Children in Private Schools	41	36	18	5	0
No Children in School	28	45	13	5	9
Education					
Non High School Graduates	31	41	11	2	15
High School Graduates	30	42	17	4	7
College (No Degree)	28	43	15	8	6
College (Degree)	28	44	15	6	7
Type of Community					
City or Town	27	43	16	5	9
Suburban	33	49	11	6	1
Rural	33	39	15	6	7



Educating Children at Home

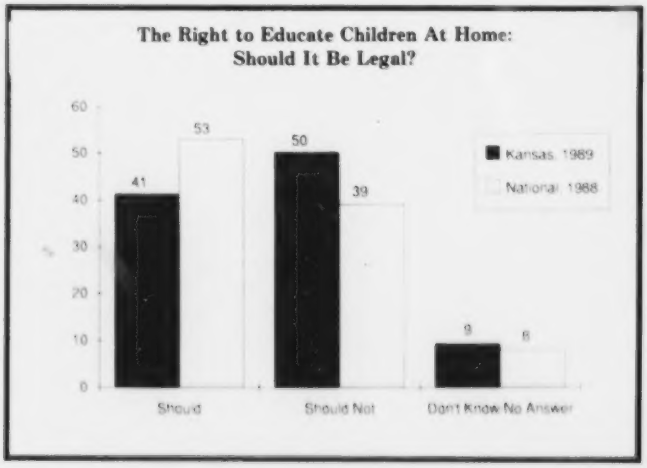
Whether or not parents should have the legal right to educate their children at home in lieu of sending them to school is a question on which Kansans are somewhat divided. (Presently in Kansas, home schools must be registered and file reports as private schools). When the question was presented to KATE VI respondents, 50 percent said such an arrangement should not be allowed, but 41 percent said it should be. Nine percent said they didn't know or wouldn't say. The question:

> Do you think that parents should or should not have the legal right to educate their children at home rather than sending them to public or private school?

Gallup presented a similar question to people across the country in 1988. The national percentages for and against are nearly the direct opposite of those obtained in Kansas—53 percent said they think parents should have the legal right to educate their children at home; 39 percent said they should not.

Percentages on this question for various population groups represented in the Kansas survey are exhibited in the accompanying table of results.

	Should %	Should Not %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
Kansas Totals	**41**	**50**	**9**
Sex			
Male	43	47	10
Female	40	52	8
Respondents with—			
Children in Public Schools	51	42	7
Children in Private Schools	54	41	5
No Children in School	37	54	9
Education			
Non High School Graduates	38	50	12
High School Graduates	35	55	10
College (No Degree)	42	50	8
College (Degree)	48	46	6
Age			
18-24	41	54	5
25-34	50	43	7
35-49	50	42	8
50-64	38	51	11
65-Over	26	64	10
Type of Community			
City or Town	39	51	10
Suburban	37	58	5
Rural	51	40	9
Occupation			
Business/Professional	43	50	7
Housewife/Homemaker	49	41	10
Skilled Labor	45	44	11
Unskilled Labor	52	48	0
Clerical/Sales	50	45	5
Farming	59	29	12
Retired	24	64	12
Student	38	56	6
Unemployed	40	60	0
Undesignated	58	42	0



Drug and Alcohol Education

There can be little doubt about how Kansans feel concerning the need in their schools for education focusing on drug and alcohol abuse. Obviously, they are alarmed by reports of the increasing use of these substances among young adults and children. Ninety-one percent of the 901 citizens recently interviewed by KATE said they think an educational program on this subject should be a requirement for all students in the public schools. Only six percent disagreed with that idea. The question:

> Do you agree or disagree that educational programs dealing with alcohol and drug abuse should be required of all students in the public schools?

Unresolved, of course, are the questions of how and at what point or points in a student's progress through school drug/alcohol education might be effectively presented. Educators believe that satisfactory answers to those questions will require thoughtful, well-executed research and experimentation. Clearly, though, Kansans, along with citizens across the nation, want their schools to do something about the subject now.

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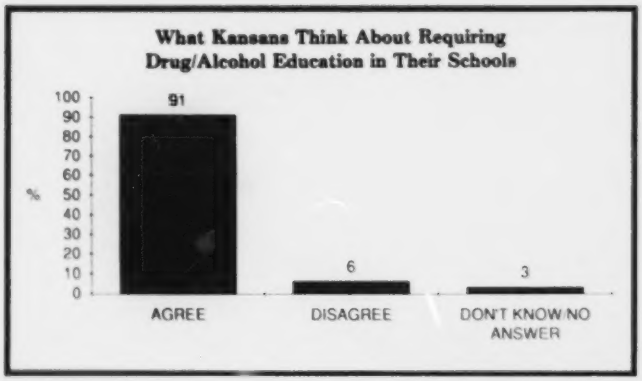


	Agree %	Disagree %	Don't Know/ No Answer %
Kansas Totals	**91**	**6**	**3**
Respondents with—			
Children in Public Schools	94	5	1
Children in Private Schools	82	18	0
No Children in School	90	7	3
Education			
Non High School Graduates	88	9	3
High School Graduates	91	5	4
College (No Degree)	91	6	3
College (Degree)	92	7	1
Age			
18-24	92	8	0
25-34	92	6	2
35-49	92	7	1
50-64	92	5	3
65-Over	87	7	6
Race			
Whites	91	6	3
Non-Whites	88	6	6
Type of Community			
City or Town	91	6	3
Suburban	90	8	2
Rural	89	8	3

Major Problems Facing Kansas Schools

As the Kansas public perceives it, the use of drugs and alcohol is, by far, the number one problem that the public schools of the state now face. It occupied first place on the problems list two years ago also, but not as firmly as it now does.

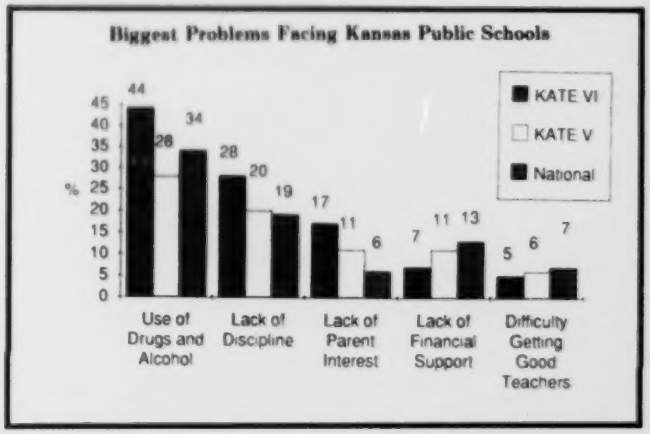
In KATE surveys, the severity of a school problem is measured by the number of interviewees who mention it in response to the following open question:

What do you think are the biggest problems that the public schools in your community have to deal with today?

Forty-four percent of the 901 people from across the state who participated in KATE VI cited drug and alcohol usage in their response. In 1987, when it was also the problem most frequently identified, 28 percent saw it as a big problem for the schools.

For years, until 1987, lack of discipline was most frequently mentioned as a major problem facing the schools, and it still ranks second on the list of problems, but it never aroused the level of public concern that the use of drugs and alcohol now does. Those two problems (drugs/alcohol and lack of discipline) ranked first and second nationally as well, according to Gallup's survey results for 1989.

Problems other than drugs and alcohol and lack of discipline that were identified by Kansans were lack of parent interest (mentioned by 17 percent), lack of financial support (seven percent) and getting good teachers (five percent).



In the table below is a rank order listing of the 10 school problems mentioned most frequently by Kansans, response percentages for the state as a whole and two key population groups in the state, and correlating national percentages.

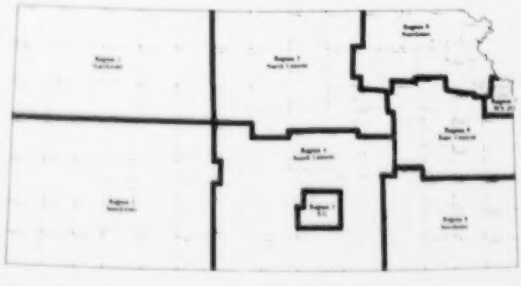
	Kansas Totals (KATE VI) %	Public School Parents (KATE VI) %	No Children In School (KATE VI) %	National Totals (1989) %
Use of Drugs and Alcohol	44	41	45	34
Lack of Discipline	28	31	28	19
Lack of Parent Interest	17	17	17	6
Lack of Financial Support	7	10	6	13
Getting Good Teachers	5	8	4	7
Poor Curriculum Standards	4	5	4	8
Communication Problems	4	4	3	1
Lack of Teacher Interest	3	3	2	4
Lack of Proper Facilities	2	6	1	1
Crime and Vandalism	1	1	1	4

KATE VI
Composition of the Sample

Sex	%
Men	45.7
Women	54.3
Respondents with—	**%**
Children in School	29.0
No Children in School	71.0
Education	**%**
Non High School Graduates	9.8
High School Graduates	29.1
College (No Degree)	30.8
College (Degree)	29.9
No Answer	.4
Age	**%**
18-24	7.2
25-34	19.8
35-49	28.5
50-64	19.6
65-Over	24.6
No Answer	.3
Political Affiliation	**%**
Republican	43.3
Democrat	26.8
Independent	17.1
Other	5.0
No Answer	7.8
Community Size	**%**
City or Town	70.0
Suburban Area	11.5
Rural	18.5
Home Ownership	**%**
Owned/Buying	80.3
Renting	19.1
No Answer	.6

Occupation	%
Business & Professional	34.3
Homemaker	10.7
Skilled Labor	13.7
Unskilled Labor	2.3
Clerical/Sales	7.1
Farming	3.8
Retired	22.3
Student	3.6
Unemployed	.6
Undesignated/No Answer	1.6
Income	**%**
Less than 15,000	17.3
15,000 - 25,000	22.0
25,000 - 35,000	19.4
Over 35,000	31.2
No Answer	10.1
Area of Residence	**%**
Northwest	4.3
Southwest	7.0
North Central	8.9
South Central	14.0
Sedgwick	13.4
Northeast	6.5
Wyandotte/Johnson	17.4
East Central	19.1
Southeast	9.0
Don't Know/No Answer	.4

KATE V
GEOGRAPHIC REGIONS



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